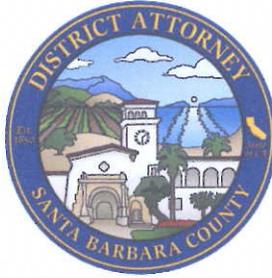


OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
JOYCE E. DUDLEY
District Attorney



DA 04-0048

RELEASE NUMBER

April 11, 2011

RELEASE DATE

Joyce E. Dudley

APPROVED BY JOYCE E. DUDLEY, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Megan Rheinschild, Victim-Witness Program

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

April 11, 2011

**Re: Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office Holds Press Conference
April 14, 2011 at 11:30 a.m., Supporting National Crime Victims' Rights Week April 10 – April 16**

District Attorney Joyce Dudley, Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown, and Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisor Janet Wolf, Second District, will share the podium April 14th, to commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week celebrated this year April 10-16, 2011.

The press conference will begin on Thursday, April 14th, at 11:30 a.m., in the Sunken Gardens at the historic County Courthouse building in Santa Barbara. The public and the press are invited to attend as Santa Barbara County officials stand together as advocates for the rights of crime victims. National Crime Victims' Rights Week was established in 1975 to draw attention to the need for efforts to uphold the rights of crime victims.

As part of the press conference County officials will present special "**Citizen of Courage Awards**" to individuals who have shown resilience in the aftermath of a crime.

Bob Okerblom was never a cyclist. Certainly he and his wife, Eilene, would not have imagined biking across the country to raise awareness about the perils of Distracted Driving. But that is what he is doing now to honor his son Eric's memory. It was a clear summer day less than two years ago when 19-year-old Eric Okerblom set out on his own bike ride. Eric had plans to join the cycling team when he returned to the University of California at Berkeley for his sophomore year. And on a road not far from his home in Santa Maria, Eric was killed when a teen driver traveling at 60 miles per hour struck his bike with her truck. The driver's cell phone records indicated that she was texting just prior to the crash. The sudden loss of their son was unimaginable. However, Eilene and Bob Okerblom have turned their grief into an education campaign to warn against the dangers of distracted driving and are working vigorously to change laws to prevent further tragedies like the one they have endured.

On the morning of September 6, 2006, 12-year-old Jake Boysel was riding his bike to school when he was struck by a car and killed. Jake and his family loved all things outdoors including hiking and biking. However, neither wearing his helmet nor his awareness of bicycle safety could defend him in that instant. His grief stricken parents were determined to do something that mattered and prevent another tragedy. Banners are widely recognized with Jake's smiling face imploring drivers to "Please Drive Responsibly." The family's public campaign included obtaining Federal Funds in 2007 for construction of the "Boysel Multipurpose Pathway Project" funded by the Federal Safe Routes to School grant program.

A "**Victim Service Award**" will also be presented to two deserving representatives of the Lompoc Police Department who demonstrated extraordinary service and commitment to crime victims. Officer Tammy Clancy and Detective Suzie Aanerud worked tirelessly during the investigation and trial of James Lujan for the 2009 beating of one child and death of 4-year-old Diego Calles. Officers Aanerud and Clancy dedicated countless hours and effort to assisting in the prosecution and conviction. In February the defendant was sentenced to 75 years in State Prison.

A Victim Service Award will also be presented to recently retired Chief Deputy District Attorney Ron Zonen. Mr. Zonen has handled some of the most difficult sexual assault and child molestation cases filed by the District Attorney's Office. Through the years Ron's kindness and expertise has instilled trust and confidence in the most reluctant and fearful victims and witnesses. He is being honored his nearly 30 years of service advocating for victims of crime, showing boundless compassion and commitment.

District Attorney Joyce Dudley states, "We stand together with the individuals being honored on Thursday, April 14th, committed to protecting and upholding Victims' Rights and ensuring the safety of citizens of our County. This office is dedicated to the pursuit of truth and justice by employing the highest ethical standards in vigorously prosecuting the guilty as well as protecting the innocent; this we do by insuring that all crime victims are treated with fairness, dignity and respect."

Award recipients will be present at the press conference and available for questions.

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